



Hockey Canada's Decision Falls Short of Meaningful Accountability

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SOAR Initiative Canada and ***Survivor Perspectives Consulting Group*** are jointly calling on Hockey Canada to release the independent adjudicative panel's report and decision. While we acknowledge the independent appeal board's findings that five members of the 2018 National Junior Team breached Hockey Canada's Code of Conduct, the suspensions announced today do not address the broader questions, systemic failures and unanswered concerns surrounding what happened in 2018.

Only five players were criminally charged, despite reports that more players were present in the room at the time of the alleged assault. The issue is not simply what happens to five players who were ultimately charged. It is what happened in that room, who knew what, what happened afterward, and whether the culture surrounding the team enabled what occurred.

The subsequent acquittals of the five players who were criminally charged must also be understood in context. The Crown was prevented from introducing significant evidence, including text messages involving the accused and others. The original police investigation closed after interviewing only four players on the Canadian 2018 National Junior Team. Police did not obtain players' text messages about the alleged assault, nor did they submit the complainant's clothing for forensic testing, or review the video they had obtained from Jack's Bar, both of which were in police possession.

An acquittal means the Judge ruled that the Crown did not prove the charges beyond a reasonable doubt on the evidence admitted at trial. It does not mean every question surrounding the alleged assault has been answered.



There are also serious questions raised during Hockey Canada's independent investigation about what happened after players learned of the investigation. Hockey Canada investigators had reviewed messages in which Michael McLeod asked what he should say about videos, followed by a response from Maxime Comtois telling him to erase the "bad video." This piece of evidence was not admitted to the criminal proceedings. And while we are not claiming that exchange establishes criminal guilt in and of itself, it is yet another piece of communication that raises questions that deserve answers.

We also question the practical significance of the suspension dates being announced as a measure of accountability. Several suspensions will expire before the next international competition for which the players would otherwise be eligible.

Suspensions may be warranted, but suspensions alone are not accountability. Announcing dates that largely run their course before meaningful international eligibility does not address the systemic failures exposed by this case. Hockey Canada must do more than close a process. It must confront what happened, explain what has changed, and demonstrate that its systems for investigating sexual violence, preserving evidence, holding players and bystanders accountable, and protecting athletes are fundamentally different today.

Hockey Canada should release the full independent adjudicative report and the full appeal board decision, with redactions necessary to maintain the parameters of the publication ban in place. It should not use confidentiality as a shield to withhold the substance, findings or reasoning of these decisions.

Canadians deserve to see the evidence and reasoning that led to Hockey Canada's conclusions. If Hockey Canada is asking the public to accept these decisions as accountability, it should be willing to show the public exactly how those decisions were reached.

Semantics are not accountability nor are the suspension dates indicative of systemic reform.

The hockey community as a whole deserves better.